A

Thanksgiving Sermon,

PREACHED

On the 31st of *December*, 1706.

A

THANKSGIVING SERMON,

PREACHED

On the 31st of *Decemb.* 1706.

AT

NEWNHAM

IN

HERTFORDSHIRE.

By *William Goldwin*, Batchelor of Arts, and Fellow of *King's Colledge* in *Cambridge*.

LONDON,
Printed by *F. L.* and Sold by *A. Baldwin*, near the *Oxford Arms* in *Warwick-lane*. MDCCVII.

Pſalm CXLIV. 15th Verſe.

Happy are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; yea, bleſſed are the people, who have the Lord for their GOD.

THE Royal Pſalmiſt having receiv'd abundant tokens of the Divine Favour, in a grateful manner *bleſſes the Lord his ſtrength*; and, to make Ver. 1. Heaven ſome return for its Kindneſs, he offers up this Hymn of Praiſe, compos'd in Honour of God, the Primary Author of all, who was *his hope and his fortreſs, his caſtle and* Ver. 2. *deliverer*; and herein he reflects on the Infinite Goodneſs and Love of God, in compariſon of the unworthineſs and lowneſs of the object, ſinful man; for, ſays he, *Lord, what* Ver. 3. *is man, that thou haſt ſuch a reſpect unto him, or the ſon of man, that thou ſo regardeſt him?* Intimating, that tho we reap the higheſt fa-

vours, as free-gifts from Heavens Bounty, we are unworthy of the leaſt: Which Conſideration juſtly ſtrikes him with a deeper ſenſe of Gratitude and Thanks, and excites his Soul to break out into a more zealous Rapture of Joy, and an uncommon deſire to
Ver. 9. *ſing a new ſong unto God, and to ſing praiſes upon a ten-ſtringed lute*: In which triumphal Hymn, running in lively, brisk expreſſions, he gives us a detail of the moſt material bleſſings of a State, *viz.* Encreaſe of Power and Wealth, Plentifulneſs and Succeſs, and then winds up the whole with the joyful Elogy in my Text, *Happy are the people that are in ſuch a caſe*: And, becauſe the above-mention'd National Bleſſings can originally be deriv'd from no other Spring but the Plenteouſneſs, Goodneſs, and All-ſufficiency of God, he ſubjoins, *yea, bleſſed are the People who have the Lord for their God.* Which Expreſſion, in Scripture Language, implies having God on their ſide, or enjoying his favour and aſſiſtance on all occaſions. Thus God declares to the *Jewiſh* Nation, who were under the more immediate Care and peculiar Protection of Heaven---*I will be their God*; and in another place----*in the morning ye ſhall be filled*
Exod. 16. 12. *with bread, and ſhall know that I am the Lord your God*; and again in the 20th Chapter----*I am*

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the Lord thy God---that is, the God that protects and ſecures you, as the deliverance expreſs'd in the next words fully explains: So that having the Lord for our God, means his being our *helper* and *defender*, the *rock* of our *might* and *ſalvation*, and ſuch-like Titles, frequently occurring in Holy Writ. And indeed the Expreſſion in itſelf needs little Interpretation, becauſe to be a God to any one, according to the true notion of a Supreme Deity, as allwiſe and powerful naturally imports the greateſt Protection and Defence.

Having thus ſhewn the deſign of the Pſalm, and the Importance of the Text, I propoſe to conſider,

Firſt, Wherein the Happineſs of a Nation conſiſts—*Happy are the people, that are in ſuch a caſe*

Secondly, Shew, that having the Lord for their God is the original cauſe of all National Bleſſings—*yea, bleſſed are the people who have the Lord for their God.*

Thirdly, What returns we are to make, and what means we muſt uſe to preſerve Gods Bleſſing upon our National affairs.

The Happineſs of a State conſiſts principally in the due performance of Religion and the true Worſhip of God, wherein *with one*

mind and one mouth we glorifie God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, in imitation of the Primitive Christians, *are continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God.* For God, who requires Reverence and Obedience at our hands, will in recompence bestow the signalleſt favours on that People where his Holy Religion is moſt and beſt perform'd, having declar'd in his Oracles, *He that honoureth me, him will I honour.* And therefore a right Exerciſe of Religion, practis'd and countenanc'd by thoſe in high Authority, and ſolemnly perform'd by thoſe in a lower Sphere, is the beſt Expedient to derive Heavens favour on a Civil Conſtitution; and upon this Bottom, as on a Rock, a Nation's Proſperity is ſo fix'd, as not to be moved by the Storms and Aſſaults of any outward, or even inward Force beating againſt it.

Luke 24. 53.

1. Sam. 2. 30.

Now, that we ſerve the Lord in this Beauty of Holineſs, and Purity of Worſhip, the Teſtimony of Scripture, the Example of the Apoſtles, and Chriſt himſelf the *head of the Church, which is his Body*, ſufficiently declare in our behalf: For without either the Exceſs or Defect in Religious Service, we *let our Moderation be known to all Men*, ſtill preſerving a due Decorum in ſingleneſs of Heart, and as the Apoſtle directs,

Eph. 2. 5.

Phil. 4. 5.

rects, *do all things decently and in order.* And when ſuch publick Mercies call for our publick Acknowledgments, we offer up in a Scriptural form a Sanctified Heart, and the calves of our Lips, and with ſuch Sacrifices God is well pleas'd. By which pure Method of Devotion we *are with one accord in the temple*, and there ſend up our joint-petitions to the Throne of Mercy for our publick and private Benefits, imploring Bleſſings upon the Eccleſiaſtical and Civil State, Welfare and Proſperity on the Gracious Moderator and Preſerver of both, Preſervation of Peace and an *Union* at home, and Succeſs abroad; and (thanks be to God) our Prayers are heard, and the Lord has not denyed us the requeſts of our Lips, *becauſe we ask not amiſs*; for *thou, O Lord, art become favourable unto thy Land*; which now ſees the Lawrel and the Olive, badges of two different States, friendly contributing to our Ornament and Joy, and both the Trophies of a Foreign War, and the Bleſſings of a Domeſtick Peace, mutually promoting the Good and Honour of a glorious Queen and happy People; in the midſt of War, we are in the midſt of Peace, and the *voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous*: And lo! The Trumpets that ſounded a Charge, are now ſounding a Triumph,

1 Cor. 14. 40.

Act. 2. 46.

Pſalm 85. 1.

umph, and the hoarſe din of War is turn'd into the *ſweet voice of Melody.*

The next Happineſs of a State is a Pious Governour, who, going wholly upon the Principle of Virtue, has a careful and tender regard for the Good and Liberties of Subjects; dealing with the People, as God, whom ſuch repreſent, does with his Creatures, and by exhibiting acts of Mercy, Mildneſs and *Beneficence*, becomes a *Nurſing Mother* to the whole Community; and thereby gets a ſort of title to the kind Smiles and Indulgences of Heaven, ſuch as we this day rejoyce in.

For when Piety and Juſtice ſit on the Throne, the height and blaze of the Example, like Lights from an Eminence, caſt a Luſtre and Influence upon the whole, and the Subjects by *ſeeing the good works glorifie their father which is in heaven*; which univerſal encreaſe of Godlineſs purchaſes Gods Bleſſing upon a Nations affairs; nay, the World is not without both Antient and Modern Inſtances, wherein the particular goodneſs of its Soveraign has engag'd Gods Providence and Favour; as on the other hand, a Monarchs Crimes draw down an heavy load of Gods diſpleaſure on the whole body of a State, and the ſtroke of Juſtice, ſo long ſuſpended for wiſe ends of

Matt. 5. 16.

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Providence, compenſates its delay by the weightineſs of the Blow; for the Vengeance due to Treachery, Bloodſhed, Rapine and Injuſtice, however ſlow in its Paces, and late in its Arrival, yet comes ſure, attended with no leſs than aſtoniſhing Diſaſters, general Routs, diſpirited Armies, degraded Princes, and *Nobles in Links of Iron*; God, by *whom Kings reign*, keeps a more ſtrict Eye upon the behaviour of Crowned Heads; becauſe by virtue of their divine Character, and as ſhining with Reflexions of his glorious Majeſty, they bear a near relation to him; and the legal or illegal Uſe of their Power, brings down either the Vials of God's Wrath, or the Plenteouſneſs of his Loving Kindneſs to the State; ſo that, as the Intereſt of a King and his People are inſeparably interwoven, the good or ill condition of a Kingdom very often turns on the Merits or Demerits of its Prince. And therefore happy, thrice happy is that Land, where Righteouſneſs and Truth flouriſh, and reign together with the Royal Preſerver and Pattern of both, where a full Enjoyment of Liberty and Property, the effects of ſuch a Covernment, compleat the Happineſs of the whole; for whilſt Virtue and Equity ſway the Scepter, Slavery and Oppreſſion keep at a diſtance, thoſe being the monſtrous,

ſtrous, but true Products of only Tyrannical Forms.

Let us add to this, that publick Meaſures and Counſels go ſteadier and ſmoother under the Guidance of Piety and Moderation; whilſt the *Thoughts of the Wicked are as a troubled Sea*, toſſing them to and fro with an unuſual Perplexity and Diſtraction in their Affairs.

The next Happineſs of a People conſiſts in its ſucceſs in War, and indeed this gives the finiſhing Stroke to the whole: For whereas a Nation, when compell'd, in defence of its Religion, Liberty and Trade, to have recourſe to Arms, opens all its Veins of Blood and Treaſure to purſue vigorous efforts againſt encroaching Power, the Proſperity of the State depends upon that of its Wars; and therefore when happy Events, glorious *Victories*, ſurprizing Deliverances, and a continual Bleſſing upon the Juſtneſs of the Cauſe crown the Heartineſs of its Aſſerters endeavours, and the Bravery of their Arms, O! How *Gracious is their God*, and *how happy are the People, that are in ſuch a Caſe.*

Laſtly, To top theſe Bleſſings the Heavenly Gift of Plenty and Quiet at home is alſo a very requiſite and eſſential part of a Kingdoms Welfare. For if whilſt it is waſting its Sinews

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in foreign Enterprizes, and ſpending its Blood in *helping him to right that ſuffereth wrong, that the man of the earth be no more exalted againſt him*, it ſhould feel the ſevere ſcourge of an home-bred diſturbance or ſcarcity, gnawing, like two Vipers, on its Bowels within, the Body Politick would ſoon dwindle into weakneſs, and the *Kingdom divided againſt itſelf would not ſtand*; but (praiſed be God) the Sores that divided the Land are kindly heal'd, and, that our *brethren may dwell together in a joyful unity*, the Precious Balm is ſpread farther, and a more comprehenſive and entire Union is near compleat throughout the *Brittiſh Iſle*. Upon the whole, we are that, and that only happy Land, that receive and taſte all the Sweets of a War, *viz.* Glory, Honour and Succeſs, without the leaſt reliſh of its Bitter Ingredients, Deſolation, Blood and Ruin; whereas moſt other Countries, now the Seats of War, are forc'd to be the Theatres of their own Calamities and our Triumphs: Triumphs, that truly beſpeak the Wonderful God that gave them, the Conduct and Valour of the Worthy Inſtruments that wrought them; Triumphs, that extend their influence far and near, and probably gave the Example and Succeſs to that Rival Conqueſt at the Walls of *Turin*,

Pſalm 10. 20.

Matt. 12. 25.

Pſ. 133. 1.

won by Heroes, equall'd by none but ours: Laſtly, Such Triumphs as deſervedly claim the grateful Tribute we are now paying to the Lord of Hoſts, *who is the only giver of all Victory.* Which leads me,

Secondly, To ſhew that having the Lord for our God, is the original cauſe of all theſe National Bleſſings.

Men obſerving the cloſe link of Cauſe and Effect, are apt to aſſign the winning of the Race to the Swift, and the Battel to the Strong, forgetting God, the Principal Agent in the caſe; as tho the Ruler of the World loll'd on his Throne with the Nod of Drowſineſs, rather than that of Authority, ſitting as an idle unconcern'd Spectator of Humane affairs, with an indifferent regard which way the Scale turns. Thus, becauſe Full Treaſuries, well Diſciplin'd Troops, Prudent Councellors, Strong Alliances, Unanimous Reſolutions, are the moſt promiſing means for a Nations good, we are too ready to reckon the Foundation of our own laying, excluſive of the Right Hand of God, and impute the Lords doing to an Arm of Fleſh: Whereas theſe outward means are but his Inſtruments of Action, and all Humane Endeavours and Deſigns would prove weak and ineffectual, without the concurrence of the

the Divine Aſſiſtance. *The Horſe is prepared a-gainſt the day of battel; but ſafety is in the Lord.* Prov. 12. 31.
For as he ſits at the Helm of the Univerſe, as an Omniſcient and Omnipotent God, he can wind and manage our Hearts, as it ſeemeth beſt to his Godly Wiſdom, he can turn the niceſt Projects and moſt formidable Preparations into Shame, Confuſion, and Precipitate Retreats; or when he vouchſafes to diſpence great Bleſſings to a *Nation that he loves*, he can bring their deſigns to a happy and ſurprizing event, *give victory unto* Princes, and *deliver his* Pſal. 144. 10.
Servant *from the Peril of the Sword*; or, wheu matters are brought to ſuch an extremity, that none but a God can *deliver* our Darling *from the* Pſalm 22. 20, 21.
power of the Dog, and ſave us from the Lions Mouth, by a ſeaſonable interpoſition of his *mighty and outſtretcht arm* he can reſcue the diſtreſs'd, ſave a juſt cauſe from ſinking, and *bring us to the ha-* Pſal. 107. 30.
ven where we would be; as was evident in the critical relief of that famous Prince and Siege, wherein appear'd ſo much of Gods Providential Care alone, as hardly left any room for State-policy to claim a ſhare in the Succeſs; which inſtance, among many glorious ones ſince, is one of the greateſt aſſurances of our *having the Lord for our God.*

Since then God, and God alone, directs and steers the course of worldly affairs, we must look up to Heaven, whence *cometh every good* Jam. 1. 17. *and perfect gift*, for the true and original Author of all our Blessings. *God is our King; the* Psalm 74. 13. *help that is done on earth, he doth it himself.* For could such well-concerted Schemes be either framed or put in execution, unless God, who governeth the Hearts of Princes, gave her Majesty Prudence, and her Senators Wisdom? Could such a Constant Stream of Success have come flowing in upon us, except the Finger of God had both guided and protected the Worthy Hands that struck the fatal, fatal Blows? Or, to look nearer home, could the Blessing of Plenty be among us, unless the Lord, that reigneth above the Clouds, and *sitteth above the water-flood*, open'd the Windows of Heaven, and from thence, as the Fountain-head of all Temporal Mercies, shower'd down Psal. 144. 13. the *former and the later rain; that our garners are full, and plenteous with all manner of store.* In a word, whatever National Advantages we enjoy and rejoyce in, we stand indebted to Heaven for them all.

And therefore it is highly Impious and Ungrateful, to impute such Successful Services to Chance

Chance or Fortune, or what the Envious World calls a *Lucky hit*: So likewiſe it is as wrong a way of judging, to reſolve the *Marvellous acts of the Lord* into the immediate effects of Humane Abilities, however Noble and Illuſtrious in themſelves. We gladly own, that Royal Prudence, Even Management, a Faithful Miniſtry in Church and State, due Adminiſtration of Juſtice, Perſonal Courage and Vigilance, are deſervedly the Darling Objects of a Nations Love and Eſteem; and as Inſtruments, which God pleas'd to raiſe up to check and confound the furious Attempts of Tyrants, Rebels, and Uſurpers; they bear indeed a great ſhare in producing great and glorious Exploits; yet ſtill the *right hand of the Lord hath the preheminence, the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to paſs.* Pſal. 188 16.

We muſt go then far above Humane Capacities, even to the *heaven of heavens*, the chief reſidence of Infinite Power and Knowledge; and there depoſit at the great Authors Throne all our Qualifications and Endowments, and Great Actions, the reſult of them; which is in effect but giving God his own again: For our Sufficiency is of God. - And *of him, and to him, and through him are all things, to whom be* Rom. 11. 36.

glory

glory for ever. Here therefore the wiſeſt Councellours muſt lay their beſt Accompliſhments of Policy and Thought, *For the Lord giveth Underſtanding.* Here the braveſt Heroes muſt reſign their Trophies at the Feet of the Lord of Hoſts. *For the battel is the Lords.* At this Heavenly Altar the moſt Induſtrious and Plenteous Land muſt dedicate their Fruits and Labours. *For God giveth the encreaſe.* Thus we ſee that all National Bleſſings proceed originally from the Divine Favour, and that the people are bleſſed who have the Lord for their God. Therefore *not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name, be the praiſe for thy loving mercy and thy truths ſake.*

Pſal. 115. 1.

Thirdly, Let us conſider what returns we are to make, and what means we muſt uſe to preſerve Gods favour on our National Affairs.

Since God has been ſhedding from day to day the kindeſt Indulgence upon us, and as publick Authority and each Man's private Obligation demand a Religious Offering of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, let us in ſome meaſure deſerve the favours receiv'd, by a cheerful Glorification of God's name, which is a lively Exertion of all the Powers and Faculties of our

Souls,

Souls, to the advancement of his Glory and Renown, and a directing and referring the whole ſcope of all our Actions to that principal end; not that our Mite adds any weight to the boundleſs Riches of his Glory, who being an ample fulneſs of eſſential Luſtre and Happineſs, can receive no additional Glory to the perfection of his Nature, yet the giving *unto God the things which are Gods, viz.* Worſhip and Obedience is a requiſite Tribute, to which God in right of his paſt favours, and from our entire relyance on him, for the continuance of the light of his Countenance on our future Deſigns, has a juſt Claim and Demand; and therefore the omiſſion of this our bounden Service, would be an ungrateful neglect of Duty on Man's part; and from ſuch Ingratiude alone, we might eaſily dread our Enemies Portion of *turning back in the day of Battel*, and feel the reverſe of our preſent Succeſs, and we too *be brought down and fall.* For will God give Honour for Diſhonour, or throw ſuch Pearls as Victories, to ſuch Swine as Ingrates, who can ſwallow the delicious Morſel of Succeſs, the Manna from Heaven, and immediately forget the Powerful Hand that gave it? O! *that men would therefore praiſe the Lord for his Goodneſs,* and

Matt. 22. 21.

Pſalm 78. 10.

Pſal. 107. 8.

and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men.

Secondly, As next under God, we owe our present Felicity to a pious and gracious Soveraign, wholly devoted to the Service of God and her People, let us render *tribute to whom tribute, cu-*
Rom. 13. 7. *ſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour is due*, and in point of Gratitude as Men, in point of Duty as Subjects made happy, let a faithful Submiſſion and Allegiance be
Rom. 13. 1. paid to the *powers ordained of God*; inaſmuch as the Goodneſs of the Poſſeſſor of the Throne, has deriv'd a double Bleſſing upon us all by healing our Wounds at home, and giving them abroad; and ſure ſuch a Collection of Princely Virtues ſhining ſo bright in the beſt of Chriſtians and Queens, muſt needs raviſh the Hearts of us all, and at leaſt unite all Parties in an unanimous Affection and Loyalty for ſo common a Benefactreſs to the State, ſo ſincere a Patroneſs of the Church, ſo generous a Defender and Preſerver of *Europe's* Liberty and Cauſe. And to ſtep a little lower to that Illuſtrious Perſon that gave the chief occaſion to this our Joy, his eminent Accompliſhments and Merits blazing ſo conſpicuous in the greateſt of Subjects and Generals,

rals, may claim ſome ſhare, if not our preſent Praiſes, (which are directed chiefly to God) yet of our Prayers for a continuance of his Life and Proſperity, ſo often engag'd, and ſo much concern'd in our Cauſe; which by his Valour is now become as much ſuperior to our Enemies in its Succeſs, as it always was in Juſtice. For this, this Perſon has levell'd the Ax at the Root of the *Corrupt Tree*, and by a Victory unparallell'd by any but one of his own, in a few days time gave a thorough Shock to a vaſt Monarchy, of above threeſcore years raiſing; and though he has not yet *bound their Kings in Chains*, yet he has fetter'd their Power; and if we are not wanting to our ſelves, and not beguil'd by Sham-Pretences to Peace, the ſame powerful Hands are both ready and able to proſecute the mighty Blows; for from the forward Advances our Expeditious *Hero* has made in the Road to his own Honour, and his Enemies Territories, the World is not without hopes of ſeeing once again a *Cæſar*, or, may I not ſay, a greater than *Cæſar* in *Gaul*.

Thirdly and Laſtly, Since the true Worſhip of God, and the exact Performance of Religion appear to be the main Expedients to pre-

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ſerve the Divine Favour to a Nation, and conſequently its Happineſs, an holy Profeſſion and Obſervance of his Worſhip preſcribed, a Devout Declaration of his Praiſe in all Publick and Private Exerciſes of Religion, the Promoting of Chriſt's Kingdom in the World, the Maintenance of his Church on the preſent eſtabliſh'd foot, are all indiſpenſable Duties on our part, and the ſureſt and beſt methods to win and ſecure Gods Favour on our Affairs: Our Contempt or Obſervance of Gods Laws, will bring either Bleſſing or a Curſe upon the State. Thus Heaven dealt with its darling People the *Jews*, and thus too will he with us, his now beloved Nation, highly favour'd of God, honour'd by our Allies, dreaded by all *that hate us*. Let us therefore wiſely lay the foundation of our Happineſs in true Piety and Holineſs, and lead ſuch Lives as may give a Force and Efficacy to our Prayers, to extort a Bleſſing upon the Publick Un-
Pet. 2.17. dertakings: In a word, let us *fear God, honour the* Queen, *love the brotherhood, and as much as in us lies live peaceably with all men*, then we may expect a continued Series of Bleſſings, and ſee foreign Kingdoms reſtored, and our own *united*, Triumphant Fleets, and ſtill Victorious Armies, and *Crowns of glory* both here and hereafter.

Upon

Upon this bottom we may fairly ground our earneſt Hopes and Wiſhes, for her Majeſty's Long Life and Happy Reign over her United People, that the *Lord her ſtrength*, will Preſerve her with the Bleſſings of Goodneſs, and continue to her and her *true* eſtabliſh'd Succeſſors a *Crown of pure gold*; that he will graciouſly guide and influence her Counſels, and crown both hers and the Nations Conſultations, with an unanimous peaceable Reſult: For Religion and Honeſty are the firmeſt Ground-works for ſucceſsful Policy, and every beſt Chriſtian is the beſt Subject, and the devouteſt Members of the Church, prove the loyalleſt Members of the State.

Upon the whole, as we can on this day ſit and look a great way back on a long and noble Train of Succeſſes, and ſee the Hand of Providence plainly appearing in each, ſo likewiſe upon a right uſe of Gods Mercies, we may take a fair and charming proſpect of more, and if it is poſſible, greater Bleſſings at the end of the Landskip, to be built on the foundation of the preſent, and ſtill hope to *have the Lord for our God.* And as we thus conclude this memorable and glorious year with a ſolemn and grateful remembrance of Gods Loving Kind-

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nefs and Mercy, fo we may hope God will in due time finifh the Work he has begun, and fo graciouſly carryed on, and at laſt crown his preſent Bleſſing of a Proſperous War, with that more deſireable Bleſſing, even the *bleſſing of peace*; which God of his infinite Mercy grant through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

FINIS.